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The Difficulties of Joyce's *Ulysses*

After teaching *Ulysses* for two years, and giving it several complete readings, I find my interest in it waning rather waxing. I speak of course only as an amateur. My complaint is that if I am to be convinced that the book is a great work of art as well as a startling literary experiment, the Joyce scholars do not give me enough help, or the right sort of help, towards forming my own judgment. They do not convince me that I *must* continue to study the book, to find out more of the sort of thing that the experts have found there.

I certainly feel that the book reveals the most *extraordinary* creative mind of our century, and that it gives us experiences unlike anything else. And there is no end to the discoveries that can be made about it. I suppose it holds more of the literary tradition than any other book (except *Finnegans Wake*), and that that is what Joyce wanted it to do, first and foremost. For when Stephen and Bloom have been discussing their individual reactions to the experience of living, on the way from the cabman's shelter to Eccles Street, we find that Stephen has been arguing (but failing to convince Bloom) about "the eternal affirmation of the spirit of man in literature". That is Joyce's gospel.

That he hinted as much is in a remark in *Finnegans Wake* quoted by Harry Levin in his *James Joyce*, but which I think has a meaning beyond what Levin gives it. Shem the Penman (who is certainly Joyce himself) refers to his "usylessly unreadable Blue Book of Eccles". *Ulysses* was a Blue Book because of its original blue cover, and also because it is a guide to, a book of information about, Dublin. It was a Book of Eccles because the Blooms lived there and because the crucial scene between Stephen and Bloom takes place there. But "Book of Eccles" contains a pun which may be more important. It suggests the Book of Kells, the famous Irish medieval illuminated manuscript, alluded to several times in the text of *Ulysses*. This manuscript was traditionally said to be the work of St. Columba or Columbanus. The journey of St Columba and his companions in the sixth century from Ireland to Scotland and through France and Italy, founding monastic schools, makes a sort of ecclesiastical Odyssey. We find several references in *Ulysses* to "the fiery Columbanus" as making Ireland known to Europe, and Stephen certainly makes a kind of identification of himself with the wandering saint.

But the actual Book of Kells is an illuminated manuscript of the Gospels and of local Irish records, and it seems as if Joyce is saying that his Book of Eccles is a parallel work. Typographically, the large capital letters at the beginning of each of the three sections of the book suggest the same usage in illuminated script, and I don't know why else they should be there. Just as the scribe surrounds his lettering with realistic and symbolic detail, so Joyce illumines his Book of Eccles with the myriad details of Dublin life and his own myriad symbols. And it contains the gospel according to James Joyce.

By the time Joyce came to write the passage in *Finnegans Wake* he was well aware that so far as the public went the book was useless and "unreadable": indeed has anyone yet really given any satisfactory interpretation of the many inter-related themes?

One of them, however, is certainly the search for relationship and the failure to establish it in any fertile or fruitful way at any level at which it is attempted: between the experience of the sense world and any supersensuous structure of experience; between the traditions of the past and the actuality of the present; between the individual and the nation to which he belongs, and the society in which he attempts to function; between the individual and the family; between individual man and individual woman, and between man and man. There is no single illustration of a satisfactory union in any of these fields. The only success is the union achieved between the *artist* and all this melancholy material, "the eternal affirmation of the spirit of man in literature."

In all ages, Joyce seems to be saying, this frustrate and fragmentary creature, man, has given pattern and permanence, "structural rhythm", to his own physical, emotional and intellectual failure, in myth, in ritual, in works of art. He has thus created something indestructible which transcends the eternal flux and the general welter of natural phenomena, including himself. "In woman's womb word is made flesh but in the spirit of the maker all flesh that passes becomes the word that shall not pass away".

To himself, Joyce's method of turning flesh into word was obviously satisfactory. "If there is any difficulty in reading what I write it is because of the material I use. The thought is always simple". But to the reader there is the difficulty both of the material itself and of the ways in which it is used.

There are innumerable things in the book that I simply do not understand at all. Much of this incomprehension comes from sheer ignorance. I just don't know enough about Christian theology, about Jewish and other religious rituals, about Irish history and myth, and so on, to recognize references. But also, beyond mere matters of knowledge, I don't understand what Joyce is *at* creatively in whole stretches of the Nighttown episode, for instance, or in the "Ithaca" chapter, or in the Hospital scene or that in the Library. And in spite of all the commentators, I still don't see how many of the recurring symbols really "work"—the black panther; God as a shout in the street; Stephen's parable of the plums; the fox and the grandmother, and many others.

But even if these stumbling blocks were overcome I should still be questioning whether the book is an organic whole, and asking for a good deal more proof before I am willing to accept it as such. Granted all the triumphant accomplishments of character creation, of the creation of the external scene and of the "texture" of innumerable individual passages. I give thanks for revelation after revelation; for how often it is that something happens similar to the change of lighting in which Bloom and Stephen see the street sweeper's horse: "so that it seemed new, a different grouping of bones and even flesh." But in the last half of the book these seem to be more and more submerged in vast tracts of verbiage which *do* nothing to enrich either the temporal or the spatial pattern—which merely blur it in fact.

What really puzzles me is that the leading Joyce critics seem to acknowledge this, while still claiming the book to be a masterpiece. Harry Levin speaks of "the independent series of self-conscious stylistic adventures", and suggests that Joyce is really only displaying his amazing talents for auditory observation and mimicry and sheer linguistic exuberance. But surely if this is so, it is a *very* damaging admission. It means that instead of producing the "esthetic stasis" of "wholeness, harmony and radiance" which Stephen demanded in *The Portrait*, it produces long stretches of the stasis of boredom, where we lose all touch with character and are helpless in the hands of an implacable Ancient Mariner merely interested in the sound of his own voice.

Edmund Wilson also says: "Joyce has always been rather deficient in dramatic and narrative sense. *Ulysses* drags: one gets lost in it. The moments of critical importance are so run in with the rest that one is likely to miss them at first reading". This again is surely very damaging? *Should* the moments of critical import in a work of art have no emphasis if they are to carry the "structural rhythm" of the whole?

Or take the opposite method to this, which is equally disconcerting: the fact that we *do* have our attention drawn to matters whose coming together appears to serve *no* purpose structurally or dramatically. In describing the talk in the cabman's shelter with the one-legged sailor from the ship *Rosevean*, Levin writes:

> We can chart the course of this ship, as it enters the harbor and unloads its cargo in the afternoon, by the crumpled handbill - an announcement of the coming of 'Elijah' Dowie - which Bloom dropped into the Liffey as he crossed the bridge in the forenoon. By means of these mechanical contrivances, the book achieves an organic quality. When we view life collectively, Joyce would suggest, we see how men are related to things. Nothing is irrelevant. Everything moves in its appointed orbit. The most ill-assorted phenomena are equally parts of an all-encompassing whole.

But surely this says precisely nothing about any *significant* relationship of men and things. We all know that the universe is full of ill-assorted phenomena all existing together and mechanically related. The question is what *new* insight into relationship is revealed by the independent facts of the handbill bobbing around the particular boat which brings the one-legged sailor who later meets Bloom and Stephen in the shelter? Surely there is no *organic* relationship at all? They remain independent *facts*.

Or Wilson will point out—and how justly!

> Joyce's impulse, in the absence of dramatic power, is to work up an epic impressiveness by multiplying and complicating detail, by filling in skeleton diagrams and laying an intellectual cassette till the organic effort at which he aims has been spoilt by too much that is synthetic.

Or he will speak of "the effort of a supernormally energetic mind to compensate by piling things up for an inability to make them move".

Yet a few pages later we find him writing, in regard to the *amount* of material in the book: "To have subdued all this material to the uses of a supremely finished and disciplined work of art, is a feat which has hardly been equalled. . ."

But surely a book is *not* supremely finished and disciplined if it has blemishes of the kind Wilson has himself pointed out so acutely? Discipline and finish *must* involve the capacity to see if material is superfluous or inorganic. Mere exuberance of creative ingenuity in language is no adequate compensation for dramatic slackness, for the blurring of essential material, and for constantly leading the reader up the garden path.

It doesn't seem to me of any value as criticism to say that because Joyce is so great in some ways it doesn't matter what he does in other ways. We have to *try* and see *Ulysses* steadily and see it whole.

And if we do that, are we not rather forced to the conclusion the book reflects the tragedy of the great literary artist in exile from everything *except* "the eternal affirmation of the spirit of man in *literature*"? It reminds me of a line in a very early poem of Yeats: "Words alone are certain good." For in these circumstances of exile from almost all other forms of relationship, the writer turns inevitably to the element in writing over which he himself can exercise complete dominance—his heritage of language. There he is in command and its riches are endless. He can exploit them to his heart's content, and finally they are the only things that do bring his heart any content. In his use of them he can pour out his unique genius: his fresh exploration of human consciousness, his fresh method of evoking that society and environment from which he had rebelled, and which he can make the butt of his satiric and comic vision. But in the use of them, too, he can also pour out all the memories of his immense reading, whether or not they illuminate the matter in hand, and he can elaborate a vast array of verbal ingenuities and of concrete detail apparently entirely for its own sake.

I would willingly be convinced

(Concluded, p. 8, col. 4)

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MAXWELL H. GOLDBERG

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BURGES JOHNSON
ROBERT T. FITZHUGH

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Who Wouldn't Have Thought?

Under the title "Who Would Have Thought?" Professor Edward Foster reports in the January *CEA Critic* on "the superb General Meeting" of the MLA at Detroit last December and interrupts his account to ask, "Is this the report of the MLA meeting or of the CEA dinner?" Assuring his readers (most of whom evidently have absented themselves from General Meetings of the MLA in recent years) that it is indeed the MLA gathering he is describing, he adds: "One hesitates to use for it such a flaunting term as *revolution*, especially since there can be no certainty now that MLA intends to spell out the implications of the addresses. One can say more cautiously that a new awareness of the educational facts has been working for several years within this august organization and that we are now beginning to feel the impact."

We are always happy to have new awareness of anything ascribed to us, but we were caught unawares by Professor Foster's concluding remark: "Lady Macbeth said, 'Who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?'" We don't get it. Is Professor Foster playing Lady Macbeth to the CEA's Macbeth (not to specify any particular Max of that valiant organization)? And are we Duncan? We refuse to *have been* Duncan, despite the strong past tense used by Lady Macbeth, who, earlier in the drama (Is this the point?), mentions the strong resemblance of Duncan to her own father. We are not so easily freudened. And if we *must* be Duncan, we assure our MLA members who are also of the CEA that they are not yet lopped from us; we are not yet out of the first act.

More seriously, Professor Foster's report has left us sanguine enough to recommend to readers of the *Critic* a few papers read in pre-1951 General Meetings of the MLA and published in the Proceedings number of the following year: "The Unsought Springs of Civilization" by Ernest Bernbaum (1947); "The New Criticism: Some Old-Fashioned Queries" by Douglas Bush (1948); "The Social Responsibility of Scholarship" by Howard Mumford Jones (1948); "Social Usefulness as a Criterion for Research" by Kathrine Koller (1950); and "The Formation of the American Humanist" by Leo Spitzer (1950). The addresses which Professor Foster praised are now published in the February 1952 *PMLA*.

Finally, let us assure Professor Foster and others that no revolution is in progress, that no blood need be spilled, and the MLA, long aware of the relations of scholarship to teaching, *does* intend to spell out the implications of such truths as it can grasp in this confused world, where a primary interest in one thing is so often construed as lack of interest in anything else.

WILLIAM RILEY PARKER
Executive Secretary, MLA

Speedboats and the Damned English Teacher

(Detroit, Dec. 27)

MC. Levette J. Davidson: Just before we sat down, I was introduced to someone as an administrator, and that started off the evening in a very poor way. My concept of an administrator, in contrast to a teacher—at least a teacher of English, was illustrated well for me a few days ago by a story you may have heard a few years ago. An English teacher died, expecting, of course, to go to a just reward in heaven. He found himself, instead, landing in a nether lake, where he joined many others. The immersed seem to have been destined to some sort of punishment. The newcomer, looking around, saw that his neighbors were all up to their necks, as we have all been, with freshman compositions, and he began to groan that Fate had been unkind. He said, "I always tried to do my duty. I got behind, sometimes, marking themes—I know. But I don't see why I had to come to Hell." Just then another well-dunked English teacher, like him immersed up to the neck, said, "If you think *this* is Hell, just wait till the administrators come by in their speedboats."

That's why I'd prefer to be known as a teacher, rather than as an administrator.

Robert T. Fitzhugh: I'm an administrator: I'm president of this organization. And one of the rare tests of an administrator (I'm sure that Prof. Davidson hasn't found this out; or he wouldn't speak as he does) is that he never does anything. He gets somebody else to do it for him. That's certainly been my career as president, and after five years as secretary believe you me it's pleasant. Nobody knows how much work goes through the secretary's office...

I once predicted that there would one day be a College English Association of ten thousand members, at which there was a gentle and rather patronizing titter. Well, since then our national membership has more than tripled, and it is now growing faster than it ever has before. That indicates something about the Association. It indicates that there's a need for what we do; and whatever we do, we do it well. People like it. This is an obvious testimony to that fact: that so many people would get up here through such miserable conditions.

Footnote for Duncan

In a Detroit *Free Press* feature article, John Griffith wrote that Prof. Rice "jarred the assembled scholars with a prediction of an educational revolution of sorts in the making". This statement suggests the background to Prof. Foster's comment, "One hesitates to use for it such a flaunting term as *revolution*."—

Prof. Parker, with the advice of the MLA Program Committee, is responsible for the selection of speakers for the MLA General Meetings. "...this Duncan/Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been/So clear in his great office, that his virtues/Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongu'd, against/The deep damnation of his taking-off..."

ERNEST LEISY OF SMU

The new CEA president is a native of Kansas. He began his career teaching in a country school...After receiving his education at the Universities of Kansas, Chicago, Illinois, and Harvard, he taught at the University of Illinois, Illinois Wesleyan, and now for many years at Southern Methodist...During summers he has taught in various parts of the country, from Duke and North Carolina in the East to the Universities of Colorado and Washington in the West...Within the past year Dr. Leisy has served as State Department expert in American literature in Austria and in Germany.

Dr. Leisy has done duty on many committees in his field of American literature, and was for years the secretary and later bibliographer, as well as chairman, of a national group on American literature...In Texas he is a charter member of the Institute of Letters and has served as chairman of the College Conference of Teachers of English...He is author and co-author of nine books, among which are *Major American Writers*, which he edited with Howard Mumford Jones, and *The American Historical Novel*. He has also contributed to *The Saturday Review of Literature*, *Modern Language Notes*, *New England Quarterly*, *Western Folklore*, *Southwest Review*, and many others.

President Leisy's keynoting message for CEA in 1952 follows:

Truce Teams on Teacher Training

I think training prospective teachers to take our place is a fundamental problem. I have never taught in a Teachers College, but I think such an institution has no monopoly in the matter. Fact is, aren't all of them trying to become liberal arts colleges? And is that deplorable?

If I understand the *raison d'être* for CEA, it was to stress the teaching problems rather than the research problems of three-fourths of the MLA membership. *The Critic* has rendered valuable service in this matter.

My idea is simply to find out what actually goes on in teaching of English courses. How much time is wasted in beautifully wondering about psychological moves, and how little attention is given practical everyday situations in the classroom!

We need to consider such matters with relation to teachers in colleges; but judging by the grumbling we do over what the high schools turn over to us, we must provide better high school teachers also.

We might ascertain what are common practices (and abuses) in Teacher Training courses, and a panel discussion might enliven what we propose to do about it. We have had workshops in various parts of Texas, participated in by secondary school teachers; and while they talk a somewhat different jargon from ours, we have found it helpful to sit across the table from each other while we threshed out our mutual problems. I wish we could do the same with the educationists by establishing some kind of truce team. I think that might do better than jawing about each other.

Extract From The Files Of An English Instructor

Case: No. 3113.
Course: Third-Year College Composition.
Subject: Jane Jones.
Age: 19.
Pre-College: Six years in a highly reputed "progressive" high school.

Present Performance and Attitude: Writing ability of subject below college-entrance requirements; subject shows no inclination to improve practice in spelling, word-use, punctuation; apparently views prospect of failure in course with indifference, desires transfer to courses where no "rules" have to be learned, where the subject's personality can be "developed without restraint and without competition"; is disposed to be voluble and argumentative in class whenever discussion can be turned to such topics as Race Relations, Religion, World Peace, History of Civilization, International Tariff and Atomic Energy; resents the lack of "the co-operative effort" in college courses generally; suggests that a self-appointed committee from the class be allowed to spend the remainder of the semester in compiling a Handbook of English Usage; deplores grading system as a cause of humiliation; says she enjoys writing but gives no thought to the organization of her themes, does not re-read or revise them "for fear of spoiling the effect."

Interview: Questioned as to why she entered college, the subject replied she wanted to promote her business and social careers; stated that, looking back over her high-school training, she had anticipated some difficulty in adjusting to college requirements, but had counted on her "training in social integration" to carry her through; had anticipated no difficulty in college English, having passed the objective entrance examination in English, thus obtaining credit for Freshman Composition 101.

In reply to instructor's inquiry as to her formal training in high-school English composition, the subject stated that she had received none; that during the last three years she occasionally took part in writing reports "on the initiative of a class committee", that her writing was read but never corrected or graded by an English teacher, was returned to her usually marked "Splendid" or "Very Expressive"; that in her senior year her English teacher pointed out some faults in spelling, advised her to use her imagination in using unfamiliar words and spell them as they were pronounced. The subject evidenced surprise upon discovering differences in meaning between *too* and *to*, *there* and *their*, *it's* and *its;* repeated that her aims in college education were "expansion of personality" and "better social integration"; admitted that she was on probation in her college office and was probably failing all her courses except Public Speaking 403.

Conclusion: The bad results of several years of "progressive" high-school training are usually difficult to correct and often too deep-seated to eradicate. In the case of No. 3113, it is apparent that her "progressive" teachers have at least temporarily insulated her from any real benefits of college education by exalting to an absurd degree her reliance on her own mental capacities and by failing to teach her habits of observation and self-discipline. Far greater and possibly disastrous disillusionment lies in wait for her when her unrealistic, warped sense of values is matched against the conditions of her post-collegiate world. *Quis custodiet custodes?*

TOM BURNS HABER
Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio.

Notes and Query

Ellsworth Barnard's book on Edwin Arlington Robinson is scheduled for February publication. . . . Roberta M. Grahame (Wellesley) is author of a newly published volume of poems, *Last Bell at Midcentury*. Available at $1.65 postpaid at Hathaway House Bookshop, Wellesley 81, Mass. . . . The *News of Scribners Books* carries a recommendation by John E. Husband (Tulane) of its MSAS edition of Paton's *Cry, The Beloved Country*.

Shiko Murakami (Harvard) is completing the Japanese translation of Bruce Dearing's "Tygers of Wrath" (Oct. *Critic*). He hopes the piece will appear in a Japanese magazine in April or May. . . Comment by Norman Foerster: Bruce Dearing's tygers certainly burn bright. . . Apropos of the same piece, Martin Shockly (North Texas State) writes: "I assume that I speak for many appreciative if unepistolary English teachers when I say I particularly enjoyed Bruce Dearing's Gettysburg Address. Beware lest some of us horses be tempted to champ and snort at the spectacle of Brother Dearing burning so bright. . . I send best wishes from another part of the forest."

Robert Conover (Kansas State) is working on a dictionary of ecclesiastical terms as used in the United States and not restricted to any one denomination. He finds that two or three denominations supply him with most of the vocabulary—the Roman Catholic, the Anglican, and the Lutheran. He finds Captain Marryat's *Diary in America* full of good material.

Query by Robert Withington (Smith College): When did "presently" come to mean "now" (instead of "shortly"?—"At Present")—When did "agenda" become a singular? *The New York Times* (top writers) so construe it. It is as bad as "a phenomena." Are both due to ignorance of reporters, commentators and editors?

Sign of the times?—a bill introduced into the Massachusetts State Legislature proposing that "American" replace "English" as designation of our field. Reason: to promote patriotism.

To be added to Werner Beyer's "a bibliosybarite's dream" (The Widener Library), the word "bibliotherapy"—bandied about in the halls of the Hotel Statler at Detroit.

Archibald Hill (Virginia), speaker at the Kentucky Foreign Language Conference. Subject: "Can Linguistics Be Made Useful to Teachers?" Cf. his paper on "Linguistic Theory and Pedagogical Application," in *Report on the Second Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Teaching*, ed. John De Francis, Sept, 1951, pp. 33-37. (No. 1, Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics, issued by The Institute of Languages and Linguistics, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown U.)

Richard Greene, visiting professor at Purdue, will give a review in the second series of "Books and Coffee." . . . Barrus Mills brought the "Books and Coffee" idea to Purdue. . . George S. Wykoff (Purdue) spoke on "Written Composition" at the October meetings of the English Section of the Indiana State Teachers Association. . . . Louis Hasley, professor of English, has been appointed director of the annual Writers' Conference held at the University of Notre Dame. Prof. Hasley contributed a fable, "Meteors in December" to the November *Critic*. Requesting several copies, R. D. Havens (Johns Hopkins) has called this story "unusual and distinctive", "excellent".

John Holmes has set up a new Writers' Workshop at Tufts, for the first three weeks of July. He will also teach modern poetry in the Tufts Summer School. His poem about his colleague Myron Files appears in the Dec. issue of the *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*. He is scheduled for a Lowell Institute broadcast on the Pepys Diary.

A. M. Withers (Concord College) calls our attention to controversy on the subject of the teaching of English language and literature in *School and Society*, June 16, Aug. 11 and Dec. 15, 1951. He adds: "Incidentally, *School and Society* is well worth the respectful attention of all of us proponents of language study. I doubt if more than the merest handful of teachers of English or of foreign languages read it."

Apropos of the national CEA meeting, this from one member: "The regional meetings are near enough to attend, but not Detroit. Unfortunately my Christmas holidays are being spent trying to figure out how to make enough money on the side to afford teaching another year.—And I do enjoy teaching."

N. Bryllion Fagin (Johns Hopkins) expresses regret at not attending the Detroit annual CEA meeting. Prof. Fagin is conducting a seminar in American drama and literary criticism at the Salzburg Institute of American Studies. A colleague there is Karl Shapiro, who is leading the seminar on contemporary American poetry. Prof. Fagin writes: "Best of luck to you with the meeting. The CEA has done extremely well and *The Critic* is a delight to read."

Thanks to an invitation extended through the local CEA chairman, Prof. Leslie Hanawalt, chairman of the English Department at Wayne, CEA stood sponsor to a television episode in "The Wayne University Story," Dec. 29. In a blackboard-illustrated interview with Frank Tuohey, Karl Dykema and Donald Lloyd explained the way new words come into being—and new uses for old words. They took up: *drip, chiseler, nickel, video,* (but not *vidiot*), *television, polio, quintuplet, CARE, WAC, gooks, fellowtraveler, brunch, smog, cinemalovely, infanticipating, lynch, quisling, kefauver* (one gangster to another: "You been kefauvered yet?").

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Who Now Reads—?

Joyce, as almost everyone knows, was a linguist and teacher of language. He liked to play with words, and play he did, especially in "Finnegans Wake." He produced, many of us believe, not a great work, but a plaything for the literary scholar. Here is a book that must be annotated even for the initiate. Every phrase must have its footnote.

With his method, Joyce, along with Pound and Eliot, set the pattern for avant garde writing, which in our time has sunk deeper and deeper into obscurity. Its language has become so private that only the literary acolyte can ever hope to understand it.

The style has become prevalent. That group of poets and critics who stem from Vanderbilt University have carefully followed in the footsteps of their masters and have gone and written likewise. They have placed their graduates in the important colleges and universities of America. They write and talk of each others' merits, and have a wonderful time writing footnotes to each other's works. They control the little magazines of our time, and those journals resemble the publications of almost any learned society. Their works are closely allied to Chinese poetry after the time of Li Po and his fellows, when letters were taken over by the academies and made not things of original talent, but verses of cross reference.

We have had this sort of thing in English literature before, and it did not last. John Lyly wrote his "Euphues" during that golden day of English writing, the Elizabethan age. It was a mesh of artificial language, twisted figures and elegant manners. The picture of elegant manners has given place to something else, in Joyce, but the rest remains the same, although the Irish writer far surpassed his English literary forebear in his inventiveness.

Who reads Lyly today? No one except the literary scholar. Other writers of Elizabeth's time hold their own, but not the author of "Euphuea." He had his influence in his own time, but it did not last. The same thing is more than likely to happen to James Joyce.

But Joyce cannot be denied his importance in our time, for he has given much to current writing. It was he who first developed to its now wide use the "stream of consciousness method" of writing and for that he has been widely admired, and rightfully so. . .

James Joyce probably is not a giant of letters but a gigantic influence upon writers. His writings will remain playthings for scholars...

KENNETH ROCKWELL.

Arlington State College, Texas.

(*Excerpts from article in Dallas Times Herald, of which Prof. Rockwell is Book Editor.*)

Stanislaus and His Brother

Stanislaus Joyce has become self-appointed judge and jury of all matters concerning his brother's pre-Paris history. He has much to say about Joyce's Paris years as well, although here he speaks with less authority. Suffice it to say that Stanislaus writes about his brother with candor and affection. He is independent in thought, fearless in judgment, forthright in expression. With a passion for exactitude he has verified or demolished innumerable "facts" concerning his brother's childhood and early career. And to a large extent he is in a position to do so. Separated from his elder brother by only two years, Stanislaus not only grew up with him; he followed him to Italy and took up the same profession of English teacher in Trieste. For years he was Joyce's daily companion. He assisted Joyce constantly in his literary work as well as in his efforts to earn his livelihood.

Nevertheless, we should not forget that Stanislaus at 67 is not gifted with an infallible memory. A good deal of what he has said or will say about Joyce may some day be revised. But for the present he constitutes our primary source of information about the author of *Ulysses*.

Stanislaus is not merely a biographer; he is a critic as well. He has definite ideas about his brother's work and he expresses them with ardor and conviction. He is a great admirer of most of the early writings. *Ulysses*, too, Stanislaus holds to be an important achievement, though not without reservations. But *Finnegans Wake* is another matter. Here, Stanislaus assumes the attitude of "the plain reader" who wants to know what is going on. Viewed from this vantage point, *Finnegans Wake* is at best a betrayal of talent and at worst a denial of art: "...whatever value may be inherent in a work of art for the artist himself and for the astute reader, it must also have an outer meaning clear to the simple man... It seems to me that in *Finnegans Wake* this meaning is lacking indeed." It is thus no surprise to find Stanislaus contending that Joyce was ruined by uncritical adulation and by Parisian worship of eccentricity. *Finnegans Wake* is a tragic mistake, a waste of prodigious genius. More than one *soi-disant* admirer of Joyce has used Stanislaus' arguments to support an attack on the *monologue intérieur*. On the other hand, Joyce has always had his share of detractors without the benefit of worshippers of *Dubliners*, and it must be said to Stanislaus' credit that he has not hesitated to denounce his brother's assailants. See what happens to a certain Myles nag Copaleen and his patriotic *confrères* in the current issue of the *Partisan Review*. Stanislaus is an opinionated man but he does not confuse morality and art. Readers of Stanislaus may not always agree with his opinions about his brother's work, yet almost everything he has to say is of interest. Let readers of Joyce wish long life and good health to Stanislaus; at the same time, let us be mindful of the critical limits of brotherly love.

HASKELL M. BLOCK
Queens College

God's Gift to the

. . . Gogarty wrote a scalding article for the *Saturday Review of Literature*, striking an assassin's blow at an important industry. Joyce—he said in effect—was a phoney and his *Ulysses*, a joke. As for *Finnegans Wake*, the whole thing was a colossal hoax, with no other purpose than to pull the academic leg of the entire world.

Need I say that the reaction was catastrophic! It was as if Gogarty had deliberately belched at Mass. No use in pointing out the ghastliness of his own position. All his life, Gogarty has been a celebrated wit in his own right, but now in his riper years he finds himself being regarded, more and more, merely as a character in the book of an early hanger-on whom he never liked. Would any man of spirit not be entitled to lose his temper, just a little, at being forced into such a role? What more degrading fate could befall anybody? But the bifocal lenses of Harvard only gleamed more glassily whenever I made this speech for the defence. Doubts had been cast on the integrity of the Textus Receptus, and for that there could be no forgiveness. It was, in short, in bad taste.

The intensity with which Joyce's work is being studied in these United States always arouses in me the same mild sense of surprise that must have been experienced by First Century Galileans as they observed the growing excitement of the Gentiles over local matters. Not that Joyce's work is unimportant to myself. Indeed, *Ulysses* was the one book that I used to carry around with me during a somewhat fluid period of my career, when more than one volume in my baggage would have been frowned upon. But this was largely for nostalgic reasons.

To a Dubliner of my generation, the book must always be rather like an old box room or glory hole in which one can spend a delightful hour taking objects of no great significance out of trunks, and putting them back again. A re-reading of it, enlarges the present by recreating the past—a past that is very clear to more Poldys than one. But what if this city and these sins for which I experience so comforting a fellow-feeling, were not mine also? If the contents of those trunks had no personal associations, would the book interest me then—after the first start of surprise at finding words in it that I have not heard in general conversation since I was a member of the Leeson Park Church Boy Scouts (where they were all in current use)? Maybe as an exercise in virtuosity, I would continue to study it; or perhaps I would read it because of the fact that it is extremely amusing.

On the whole, however, these are not the baits that are being offered to the Sophomores as reasons for enjoying Joyce. As we have seen, they are being set to mull over the nine months of pregnancy, and to consider the significance of each. They are being told that Mr. Bloom is a Scapegoat, bearing on his shoulders the sins of the human race, and they are well out now on a limb of the Golden Bough, looking for anything else that can be found with whiskers and horns. They are busy writing papers on Bruno's idea that all created things are the offspring of a Demiurge of Intellect and a Matrix of Necessity. And they are shaking their heads over Vico's picture of History as a sort of organ-grinder with only a limited number of tunes.

From a letter of Joyce to Frank Budgen quoted by Mr. Klein, it is quite clear that most of this is just as Joyce intended. He did, in fact, write his Oxen chapter in nine parts, with (believe it, or not), Bloom as a spermatozoon and Stephen as the embryo. . .

So what? So the scholars have not just invented all this for themselves, and are evidently justified in going ahead with their analyses. If we presume to question the significance of these aspects of the chapter—except, perhaps, as an attack on birth control—it is the master we must attack and not the disciples. It is true that in some instances the latter have gone too far. For example, I have been present at a discussion that raged around a recent discovery that it is not possible to gaze upon "the snout of Bray Head" from a roof overlooking the Forty Foot Hole, as described in the Telemachus chapter; from which fact one commentator wishes to argue that the scene of this episode ought properly to be placed in the Martello Tower at Sutton, or else on Dalkey Island, with whatever consequences this change implies. One can see what complications this sort of thing could lead to, wherever it is not realized that the things that Joyce has forgotten about Dublin are often more remarkable than the things he remembered.

Meanwhile, a mass of misinformation provided by people like his brother, Stanislaus, and by biographers who do not wish to tell us the whole story for reasons of good taste, is sign-posting the way down further blind alleys. For the present, however, most of the departments are having as much as they can do in disentangling the

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English Departments

author's actual message. This is a task which he deliberately left to others, and it was a very clever move to have done so—unless we are wrong in our suspicions that Joyce's message is the least important part of Joyce.

There is actually no reason why the legacy of Dedalism to the world should be of very great weight once it has been discovered. It is only a coincidence when those who have the supreme gift of self-expression in any of the arts have got anything startling to express. The one does not in any sense depend on the other. The impression of profundity that we get from Shaw, for example, comes from his lucidity rather than from any special merit in his plethora of half-truths. Compared with Goethe or Ibsen—who happened to have had both gifts—he is a very readable Smart Alec, with a good line of bull that smothers opposition. Swift was another case in point. What gallons of ink have been expended in endowing him with a meaning, when all that he needs is a biography.

Now, one only has to read Joyce's description of the movements of a dog to see what a consummate artist in words the man is—what evocation of all the dogs one has ever seen can be brought about in a few lines of prose! But is he more than an artist—if that is not sufficient in itself? What nuggets have the diligent workers in the quarry of Great Thoughts managed to produce so far?

Well, respectfully admitting that ontogeny is probably a recapitulation of phylogeny, we have the fact that all religion begins in a thunderclap; that the Liffey is female, while Howth Head is definitely male; that in the world of dreams, all time happens at once. This, I admit, is impressive enough, and may perhaps provide some clues to a new way of life. But it also must be admitted that the vast bulk of the clues from *Finnegans Wake* that we have been offered to date, are concerned only with puns, chance resemblances of words, forced parallels from history or mythology, and (Joyce's greatest sin) an unabashed confusion of the subjective with the objective that makes it impossible to distinguish between the author's observation of his hero, the hero's observation of his past, or the reader's observation of any of them. In fact, there is an air of unreality about all the explanations that reminds me irresistably of a commentary on the liturgy, and not of literary criticism at all.

If this makes us suspicious, it also has had the effect of making him God's gift to the English Departments. It is not always realised that scholarship is just as much a trade or profession as politics and religion. In the fields of learning there are many lectures that have to be given, and many, many theses that have to be written in the course of each academic year. And in this respect Joyce provides a widow's cruse. I do not suggest for a moment that there are not innumerable teachers of Modern Literature who are not genuine lovers of Joyce as a brilliant craftsman and as an acute observer of life. But there is more in the present-day excitement than this.

Twenty-five years ago he had many readers whom he would not otherwise have had, because of a mistaken belief that he was pornographic. Now that is all past—except in his home—and he has become instead an enigma. A great many conscientious workers are professionally interested in the study of this enigma, and many reputations have already been committed to the hazard of the printed page. Herein lies the nub of Gogarty's offence. He has broken the Geneva Convention that is observed in all professions from barristers to bootleggers. Outsiders must not foul the pitch.

Joyce may be right or wrong, significant or unimportant. But he must not be a hoax. Too much depends on him. He has too many ideal readers suffering from the ideal insomnia. To have known him in the flesh gives one a right to a seat amongst the Fathers. Like Polycarp, I never had this privilege myself. But, like Polycarp, I have known the Fathers—which is the next best thing.

DENIS JOHNSTON
Mt. Holyoke College
So. Hadley, Mass.

(Excerpts, reprinted with author's permission, from "A Short View of the Progress of Joyceanity," in "Envoy", V. (No. 17, Apr. 1951), [13]-18.)

Envoy is published monthly, in Dublin, Ireland, as a "Review of Literature and Art." U.S.A. and Canada $5.00 per year, 60 cents per single copy. Agents: Eastern News Co., 165 E. 35th St., New York City. The issue for Apr., 1951 is a special Joyce number. It includes five photographs of Joyce.

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Notes on Teaching *Ulysses*

Pleasures from the Text Itself

1. This book presents in a peculiarly painful form the special difficulties of a classroom relation to literary works; the apparatus that already surrounds it suggests the possibility and danger of our taking the scaffolding for the skeleton and basing our views of *Ulysses* upon the systematic and more or less demonstrable nature of its correspondences; whereas a more essential consideration might begin with one phrase, "the ineluctable modality of the visible," and try to show the elaboration of the novel's forms rather upon this basis than upon the ingenious set of equivalences worked out, even with the master's approval, by Stuart Gilbert.

2. The development of style represented in *Ulysses* might be divided into the following topics:

a. Great increase in detail over any previous novel except perhaps Bouvard & Pecuchet; attention to minutiae; illusion of nature.

b. The onomatopoetic method employed to secure this result; an effort to make words "really" resemble the things they denote.

c. The manifold point of view, shifting without the artifice of transition between the internal and external, from one character to another, from one way of seeing (style) to another, from one scene to another.

d. The imposition of a factitious unity by references to myth; correspondences which are certainly not made at random, but certainly not, on the other hand, convincingly demonstrable down to the last detail.

e. The self-conscious mockery of this unity by naturalism carried to the point of parody.

f. The attempt to secure new perspective by breaking content and style apart, or better, by showing the enormous chasm that has always existed, according to some artists, between content and style.

3. The temptation of the subtle reader is, perhaps, the temptation of theology: to show the world of the work as flowing by rationally demonstrable ways from the hand of its creator, as elaborated detail for detail from some sort of unity. *Ulysses*, for the reasons given above, puts this temptation in a specially poignant way—so many details, their interconnexions so plausible and yet so mysterious, the final value of these symbolic hierarchies tantalizingly near "correct" and yet ultimately—it is good to say—elusive.

4. Finally, we are dealing with students, who will mostly be reading the book for the first time and should not altogether be encouraged to talk about Homeric parellels before reading Homer; as Henry James has very prettily put it, you can't go mountain-climbing in a flat country. There is this difficulty about teaching, that we can talk only about that which can be talked about, and in this sense we are always liable to love best the book that teacheth best, or, as the new critic says, "really works out." That is, we are always, even when quite careful, subtly or blatantly lobbying for an extension of the area that can be talked about, and likely to substitute knowledge about a book for experience of it. This is 'natural', I suppose at least in the sense that we must go into the classroom and talk for an hour; but I mean to suggest that a proper humility will lead us to curb our theological ambitions for this book, trying to derive our pleasures rather from the text, however simply, than from the neat and not altogether convincing arrangements of the commentators.

HOWARD NEMEROV
Bennington College
Bennington, Vt.

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Ulysses, the Hair Shirt, and Humility

The first problem in teaching *Ulysses* is a very personal one: who is Joyce? or where does *Ulysses* end and the teacher begin? For the instructor's great temptation is to teach himself instead of Joyce. *Ulysses* can be used as an exalted platform from which to launch into a trapeze act; and, if the trapeze artist is sufficiently skilled, the audience is led through a series of oohs and aahs to an awed exhaustion—and an uncomfortable feeling that a lifetime of training is necessary to get at the novel. Nor is the honest teacher free from the temptations of the trapeze artist, since the material in *Ulysses* is so rich, and complex, and fascinating that the lure of warping the book into a pattern made in his own image is always present in some degree to the teacher. Needless to say, Joyce is better.

The second problem is the equipment which the student brings to bear on *Ulysses*. He probably has two misconceptions about the book. He has heard that it is very difficult, some 768 pages like Eliot's poetry to which you must bring encyclopedic information and infinite numbers of languages in order to penetrate its jungle of words. He has heard that it is dirty, a book long banned from our respectable shores, a forerunner in the novel of the four-letter word; and choice excerpts read from the well-worn last chapter of the Library copy of *Ulysses* have solidified this impression. It is fairly easy to show that intensive reading of the text and not outside information resolves most of the novel's "obscurity"; but it is not so easy to dispel the idea of obscenity, even after repeated illustrations of how Joyce uses sexual material to make the most serious moral commentaries, since the confusion of subject matter with its treatment by the author is still heavily upon us. Repeated injections of common sense generally cure this malady.

Other difficulties arise out of the student's limited experience with life and literature. *Ulysses* is probably the most complex work of literature that he will ever read, and its complex view of experience, its structural complexity, the complexity of its emotions, and the complexity of its statement must somehow be brought within his ken. Here mechanical first aids can be applied. A chart can give him the information which Joyce supplied Stuart Gilbert about the complex apparatus of the book. Mimeographed aids are practically necessary to keep the student from getting swamped in the Wandering Rocks, Sirens, Cyclops, Oxen of the Sun, and Circe chapters. And, in one way or another, the student's attention can be called to important themes early in the book which are woven so richly into its texture later on.

All this helps, but by so thoroughly equipping him with these aids, the teacher has helped to create another difficulty in the student's mind, since once into the novel, he becomes convinced that Joyce is a flaming genius because of his technical brilliance. Overwhelmed and fascinated by Joyce's technique, he tends in his awe to miss the far more important aspects of *Ulysses;* and in overvaluating its technical novelty, he is inclined to miss the book's fundamental deep conservatism. This overvaluation must somehow be curbed.

These problems are offset by the fact that the student tends to be interested in *Ulysses* because he senses that is concerns him. It is only necessary to show him how to read and dramatize the text and to lead him into some of its larger aspects. These are myriad, and the book could be taught so many radically different ways, each offering rich resources and exciting material, that strenuous thought is required to determine what to present and how to present it.

My method of teaching *Ulysses* is grounded on the following ideas about the book. First, it is Bloom's book. Structurally, he serves to tie into the novel almost every one of its aspects and relate them to each other. Esthetically, the artistic excellence of the novel depends heavily on the characterization of Bloom. From the point of view of social commentary, Bloom is the hero of the modern world (not a mock hero); and despite his manifold indignities and absurdities, he emerges at the end of the book as a figure of human worth and beauty, the one solid promise of salvation for humanity. Like the great novels of the 18th and 19th century, *Ulysses* will last largely because Bloom involves the careful and sensitive reader in his plight.

Second, *Ulysses* is a comedy, not a tragedy. The successful characterization of Bloom is to a considerable extent a result of his being presented in a consistently humorous light. Even the chapters which contain Joyce's most scathing moral commentary on moral decay in the modern world are brightened with laughter. Joyce is one of the great writers of comedy, and his remarkably rich variety of humor ranges from the broadly Rabelaisian (and how to get female students to see this?) to the strictly literary. *Ulysses* is the work of a man who was in love with life.

On the other hand, it is also the work of a strict moralist, hence much of its complexity. *Ulysses* is certainly one of the most profound moral statements written in this century, and Joyce's social commentary surges throughout every chapter just below the surface. That the book was mistaken for obscenity is one of the great ironies of history.

Third, Joyce's stylistic originality is not of central importance to the total effect of the novel. The effect of his chapters rarely depends very much on the style of the chapter, and the style often hampers what Joyce is trying to do. The elaborate apparatus of levels and symbols in the book is sometimes quite ineffective, sometimes quite clumsy. That a chapter like Oxen of the Sun is brilliantly effective despite its incredible manipulations of styles, not to mention the many symbolic balls kept juggling in the air at the same time, is a feat equivalent to a ballet dancer performing Swan Lake over an obstacle course mounted on a tightrope—and making it look beautiful.

On the other hand, the chapter structure is very important. Joyce constructs most of his chapters like concerti. There is a background orchestration, composed of characters and physical environment, which produces an emotional situation against which are played one or two figures in the foreground. Stephen is a brilliant violin; Bloom is a rich cello played by an amateur; Molly is an organ gone wild. The shift in focus from orchestra to solo instruments, and the juxtaposition, contrast, and interweaving of the two elements produces the commentary of each chapter and its complex emotional effect.

My handling of *Ulysses* keeps pace with the students' reading of the book by treating the chapters chronologically. It aims to keep the students away from the commentaries (which are treacherous), and to get him to read the text intensively and think about its larger aspects. The student is led into ways of reading the book by a shift in the central emphasis of the lectures or seminar sessions as the course progresses. We first concentrate on subtlety and complexity of statement, then on chapter structure, then on complexity of tone, and finally on the characterization of Bloom and the development of the Father-Son theme. Along the way, the multiple aspects of the novel are brought out in connection with the chapters which best illustrate them.

But whatever method of teaching is used, the teacher must resign himself to the fact that after covering *Ulysses* in a course the student is just about equipped to begin his first profitable reading of it. The book invites rereading in the self-contained quality of its chapters. They can be read as separate units, and as the student's grasp of the details in separate chapters increases, the rich interconnections of the whole novel begin to emerge distinctly, and the obscurities fade away. If the student is led to the book in the right way, it will grapple him to itself with hoops of steel. He must be led to come back to it, since any valid understanding of *Ulysses* depends on the reader becoming steeped in its details. Swooping minds can work fruitfully with other novels, but *Ulysses* more than any other demands an act of humility, the putting off of the swooping manner and donning of the hair shirt of pedestrian labor over its details, before a fruitfulness born of understanding can be achieved. This age has little time for humility, and this is why *Ulysses* is so often severely abused in print and in class.

ELLSWORTH MASON
Marlboro College
Marlboro, Vt.

Will o' the Wisp or Pillar of Fire

As Joseph Prescott reminded us, this month marks the seventieth anniversary of Joyce's birth; the thirtieth, of Ulysses. In 1951, CEA groups discussed Joyce and the teaching of Ulysses. Results are here given. They suggest the magnitude of James Joyce, his power to irritate or inspire, the barriers he sets up for those who want to teach him, the classroom triumphs he yields to some; the frustrations, to many.

The Difficulties of Ulysses

(Concluded from p. 1, col. 4)

that all this *is* important in some way, but at present I can't convince myself of it, or find any critic who can convince me. This is depressing, both as regards the enjoyment of the book itself, and from the point of view of the prestige which it enjoys. For if we accept, and urge students to accept, as the richest prose writing of our age, a book which is basically incoherent, (in the sense that it does not cohere or coalesce into a real organic unity), it is very undermining to any stable judgment about works of literary art in general.

ELIZABETH DREW
Smith College
Northampton, Mass.

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A Semester's Course in James Joyce

For the third consecutive year I am offering a semester's course in the works of James Joyce. Perhaps a brief account of it will have some interest for readers who may be contemplating similar offerings.

The required texts are Harry Levin's *Portable James Joyce* (Viking) and Joyce's *Ulysses* (Modern Library).

The enrollment is limited to fifteen: undergraduates who have had a course in The Modern Novel, Contemporary American Literature, or the equivalent, and graduate students. They read *Dubliners*, *Stephen Hero*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Exiles*, *Ulysses*, *Collected Poems*, excerpts from *Finnegans Wake*, Herbert Gorman's *James Joyce*, and Harry Levin's *James Joyce: A Critical Introduction*. Graduate students read, in addition, Stuart Gilbert's *James Joyce's ULYSSES: A Study*, at least a half dozen articles on *Ulysses*, parts of Joseph Campbell and H. M. Robinson's *Skeleton Key to FINNEGANS WAKE*, and at least four articles on *Finnegans Wake*.

The course falls into three divisions, each the subject of a paper: (1) the early works; (2) *Ulysses;* (3) the excerpts from *Finnegans Wake*. About five weeks go to the early works, about seven to *Ulysses*, about four to the excerpts from *Finnegans Wake*.

To begin to chart the sea of literature on Joyce for the purpose of this course, I provide, at the outset, the following list:

Selected Bibliography on James Joyce

The fullest bibliographical information to date is to be found in:

Alan Parker, *James Joyce: A Bibliography of His Writings...* (Boston: F. W. Faxon Co., 1948) —supplemented by

William White, "James Joyce: Addenda to Alan Parker's Bibliography," *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, XLIII (Fourth Quarter, 1949), 401-411.

The following works are especially useful:

Herbert Gorman, *James Joyce* (New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc. [1948]). The official biography.

Stanislaus Joyce, "Ricordi di James Joyce," *Letteratura*, V, 3 (July-Sept., 1941), 25-35; V, 3 (Oct.-Dec., 1941), 23-35. Available in English as follows: (1) *Recollections of James Joyce*, tr. Ellsworth Mason (New York: The James Joyce Society [1950]); (2) "James Joyce: A Memoir," tr. Felix Giovanelli, *Hudson Review*, II, 4 (Winter, 1950), 485-514. The forthright memories of Joyce's brother.

Harry Levin, *James Joyce: A Critical Introduction* (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions [1941]). The best account of Joyce's work as a whole.

Stuart Gilbert, *James Joyce's ULYSSES: A Study* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1931). The authoritative commentary on *Ulysses*.

Joseph Campbell and H. M. Robinson, *A Skeleton Key to FINNEGANS WAKE* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co. [1944]). The indispensable guide to *FINNEGANS WAKE*.

Seon Givens, ed., *James Joyce: Two Decades of Criticism* (New York: Vanguard Press, Inc. [1948]), the articles by Irene Hendry, Levin and Shattuck, Kenner, Farrell on the *Portrait*, Eliot, Damon, Troy, Wilson, Campbell.

During the semester, as might be expected, other publications are referred to.

A useful accessory is the film *James Joyce's Dublin*, which shows some of the places important in Joyce's work and at times serves as a commentary on specific passages. This film, with a script by Professors M. L. Hanley and Roger McHugh, may be rented from the Bureau of Visual Instruction, University Extension Division, The University of Wisconsin.

Very useful for an introduction to the world-technique of *Finnegans' Wake* is Joyce's recording of the conclusion of the "Anna Livia Plurabelle" chapter (Orthological Institute, Cambridge, England). "To give the simple sense" of the record, Joyce and C. K. Ogden produced a version of its text in Basic English (*Transition*, March, 1932). A French version of part of the text of the record is to be found in a translation made by a group which included Joyce (*Nouvelle revue française*, May, 1931, reprinted in Philippe Soupault's *Souvenirs de James Joyce*). Another passage in the same chapter is amenable to especially illuminating analysis as it is easily available in four successive versions (Edmund Wilson's *Axel's Castle*, Appendix I, plus the *Portable James Joyce*, pp. 728-729) which indicate how the text evolved.

Altogether, I have found that the course has value not only for an understanding of its titular subject but also as a focal point for the consideration of a number of matters that are central to the study of modern literature, such as (1) the shift from the nineteenth century to the twentieth, (2) the relation between the twentieth-century artist and his society, (3) the relation between literature and science, (4) the stream-of-consciousness method in modern fiction, and (5) the problem of obscurity in modern literature. One who reads Joyce intelligently should be able to deal intelligently with many other important figures in modern literature. In conclusion, however, it might be emphasized that the members of the course are never far from its principal business, the text of Joyce.

JOSEPH PRESCOTT
Wayne Univ.
Detroit 1, Mich.

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Comments

As to "splintering" I wish something could be done to establish Comparative Literature Departments which would employ young men specially trained to teach such courses as world literature, world masterpieces. I have 2-3 Ph.D.'s every year who all know at least two languages besides English very well and no doubt, Harvard or Columbia have many more. I don't think the English Departments need to feel aggrieved about this development. They never complain about French or German Departments, and there is no reason why world literature courses should be taught *only* by English teachers.

RENÉ WELLEK
Yale Univ.
New Haven, Conn.

Billingsgate vs. Brains and Good Will

May I express my admiration for the reasonable tone and content of Bruce Dearing's comment, in the December *Critic*, on Donald J. Lloyd's article.

I am always being surprised by the capacity a question concerning language has, for arousing emotion. Why should a pronunciation of *tomato* or *either* evoke such contempt? Why should the grammar-minded (e.g., Ralph Allen) when they write usually exhibit such a despairing rage at those less precise; and why should libertarians (e.g., George S. McCue) get red in the face at the scent of a precisionist, and try to wipe up the ground with him? In short why, as Donald Lloyd aptly though unhandsomely put it, do scholars so often use the tones of snobs or slobs?

Among the uninformed such differences of opinion usually arise because of limited experience and knowledge; among the learned they really seem to spring from differences in taste, and scarcely warrant so much *odium linguisticum*. On disputed usages, each scholar takes the side that pleases him, presumably knowing the arguments for the other side, and finding them unpalatable. Will Professor Pence's sly attack on the grammarians from the rear, in his clever attempt to prove that *like* (in "do like he does") can be lawfully parsed,—will his very sensible approach change anyone's opinion on this point? I trow not. And had he blustered, he would only have set his opponents most firmly in their previous choice.

Not that there should be no argument, of course. But too often I cannot taste the meat for the sauce. I resent being ordered peremptorily to leave my language alone; just as I resent being ordered to come to heel as though I were a dog in an obedience-class, by someone to whom N. E. D. is the law and the Fowlers the prophets. And the amusing thing is that all our fulminations have no perceptible effect on the language, either that used by ourselves or by the populace at large. After some centuries of prohibition, the double negative still flourishes like the green bay tree; I agree with Professor Pence's stand, but I shall never use *like* "like" I do so. (Will he?)

Sometimes the New Criticism combatants (on both sides) have exhibited stupid arrogance and allowed themselves to use unnecessary acrimony, but they have somewhat more excuse; at least they are not arguing about the jots and tittles of the law.

Having said all this in behalf of sweetness and light, let me admit that billingsgate and fisticuffs are much more exciting to witness, and that if correspondents to *The Critic* insist on getting hot under the collar and cracking the veneer of their gentility, I'll read them zestfully. But my real admiration goes to those who, like Bruce Dearing, have no wish to bethump their antagonist, but seek the truth armed only with brains and goodwill.

MORSE ALLEN
Trinity College
Hartford, Conn.

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CEA Regional

SECEA

Next meeting: Florida State U., Tallahassee, Feb. 22-23. Officers: Nathan C. Starr (Rollins College), pres.; Edward Foster (Georgia Institute of Technology), first vice pres.; Paul Haines (Alabama Polytechnic Institute), second vice pres.; Sarah Herndon (Florida State U.), sec'y-treas. Advisory Council: W. H. Rogers (Florida State U.); Calvin S. Brown (U. of Georgia); P. P. Burns (Howard College).

Penn. CEA

Spring meeting: April 19, Franklin and Marshall, with Kenneth Longsdorf as local chairman. Officers: William W. Watt (Lafayette), pres.; George J. Becker (Swarthmore), vice pres.; Lois Montgomery (Wilson), sec'y-treas.

NY CEA

Spring meeting: U. of Rochester. Officers: Ralph Tieje (Champlain), pres.; Sanford Meech (Syracuse), vice pres. Advisory: Kathrine Koller (Rochester), Strang Lawson (Colgate).

NECEA

Spring meeting: Trinity College, with Ralph Williams (Trinity) as program chairman. Officers: Norman Holmes Pearson (Yale), pres.; Osborne Earle (Brandeis), first vice pres.; Roberta Grahame (Wellesley), second vice pres.; Howard Bartlett (MIT), sec'y-treas. Directors: Curtis Dahl (Wheaton), Warren Smith (Rhode Island), Ralph Williams (Trinity), Frederick Holmes (Northeastern), C. Harris Daggett (New Hampshire), Ruth Southwick Maxfield (Emerson), C. L. Barber (Amherst), Helen Randall (Smith). *Erratum*: on the list of newly elected NECEA directors (Dec. *Critic*), Carl J. Weber (Colby) should not have been named. In explaining why he could not serve, Prof. Weber wrote: "No matter how inviting, the job is just now quite beyond me. I cannot accept. Thank you very much, and best wishes to you."

Greater NYC CEA

Spring meeting. Officers: Carl Lefevre (Pace), pres.; Thomas O. Mabbott (Hunter), vice pres.; Haskell Block (Queens), sec'y-treas.; public relations officer, John Waldman (Pace).

Middle Atlantic CEA

Spring meeting: U. of Maryland. Officers: Carl Bode (Maryland), pres.; Charlotte Crawford (Howard U.), vice pres.; Joseph W. Hendren (Western Maryland), sec'y-treas.

Indiana CEA

Spring meeting: The sixteenth annual conference of the Indiana CEA will be held at Hanover College, Friday and Saturday, May 16-17. The dinner speaker will be William Carlos Williams.

The Friday afternoon meeting will be devoted to several literary or scholarly papers; the Saturday morning meeting will deal with problems of teaching in such areas as composition, poetry, drama, fiction, creative writing. Richard Crowder (Purdue) is Program Chairman.

All college and high school teachers and all others interested in such teaching are cordially invited to attend the meetings.

ICEA officers: William Sutton (Ball State), pres.; Allan Kellogg (Indiana Central), vice pres.; Pauline White (Franklin) sec'y-treas.

Chicago CEA

Spring meeting: Sam Workman (Illinois Tech.) reports work being done on the program for the annual spring meeting. Officers: Kendall Taft (Roosevelt College), pres.; Robert W. Frank, Jr., (Illinois Tech.), vice pres.; Benjamin Lease (Univ. of Illinois, Navy Pier), sec'y-treas.

Calif. CEA

Spring meeting. Officers: Clarence Sandelin (L. A. State), pres.; Edward Coulson (Santa Monica City College and U. C. L. A.), vice pres.; Ruth Newby (Redlands U.), sec'y-treas.

Mich. CEA

Spring meeting. Officers: Carson C. Hamilton (MSC), pres.; Kathryn Robb (Marygrove), vice pres.; Ralph N. Miller (Western Mich.), sec'y-treas.

Rocky Mt. CEA

Fall meeting: CEA members and the national CEA office will cooperate in the program for the session on the teaching of English at the sixth annual meeting of the Rocky Mt. MLA, Colorado A. and M. College, Fort Collins, Oct. 12-13. Rocky Mt. MLA officers: Alfred R. Westfall (Colo. A. and M.), pres.; Lewis Mansfield Knapp (Colorado College), vice pres; Mrs. Etholine Grigsby Aycock (Colo. A. and M.), sec'y-treas.; Ernest Warnock Tedlock, Jr. (U. of N. M.), ed. Rocky Mt. MLA *Bulletin*.

Va-NC CEA

Fall meeting. Officers: George F. Horner (Univ. of N. C.), pres.; Charles Harding (U. of Va.), vice pres.; Jane Summerell (Woman's College, U. of N. C.), sec'y-treas.

National CEA Election Returns

President: Ernest E. Leisy (Southern Methodist)
Vice Presidents: John Holmes (Tufts), T. M. Pearce (New Mexico)
Directors: Bruce Dearing (Swarthmore), Robert Fitzhugh (Brooklyn), Kathrine Koller (Rochester), Alan McGee (Mount Holyoke), Noman Pearson (Yale), Autrey Nell Wiley (Texas State College for Women), George Wykoff (Purdue).
Continuing Directors: Gordon Keith Chalmers (Kenyon), Joseph Addison Giddings (South Dakota), Thomas F. Marshall (Western Maryland)
1951 Nominating Committee: Balfour Daniels (Houston), Irving Churchill (Coe), Alan Ryan (Notre Dame), chairman.

National CEA Day Book

January 21, 1952

The School Review (Univ. of Chicago) has cited *The CEA Critic* for its lively debates on college English teaching and for its reports on discussions held throughout the country...Mr. Thornton, editor of *What the Colleges Are Doing* has included an item from *The CEA Critic* in his current issue...CEA has just granted to *Opaque Projectors Practices* permission to reprint Capt. Jackson's article "On Opaque Projectors Again" (Oct. 1951 *Critic*). 40,000 copies of the *OOP* to be run...to be distributed at convention of National Education Association, Boston, next month... Bruce Dearing's *Tygers of Wrath* has been done into the Japanese... will appear in educational periodical, April or May.

CEA is to cooperate with the American Council on Education in its concern about the improvement of college teaching...CEA is being represented at coming UNESCO-sponsored conference at Hunter College.

CEA is cooperating with MLA and ACLS in the census now under way among scholars and teachers of the humanities and the social sciences...with the Department of State and ACLS in publicizing opportunities for teachers of English as a second language and for re-tooling courses needed for this work...CEA is distributing to Bureau of Appointments registrants ACLS leaflets on these opportunities.

J. Fletcher Wellemeyer, Jr., ACLS Staff Adviser on Personnel Studies, is making a confidential study of Bureau of Appointments registrants to assess their qualifications and their relation to the current displacement. Report on basis of preliminary sampling: "The median age of the group is 34, with quite substantial number under 30. The median age of members of the Modern Language Association in 1950 was 43. About 20% of both groups were women. About 55% of the CEA applicants had acquired the doctoral degree compared with 70% of the MLA membership. However, a number of the registrants had obtained a master's and had substantial work beyond that level, and in most cases are young enough to lead to the assumption that they would receive the Ph.D. The total number with Ph.D. degrees and with substantial work beyond the master's amounts to...85%. Registrations at Detroit would raise Ph.D. percentage...

Mortimer Graves comments: "*CEA Critic* contains about as much good information as comes out in any such small package."

SPEAKERS AVAILABLE

(1.) Mortimer Graves—Administrative Secretary, American Council of Learned Societies, is interested in following up CEA suggestion to have ACLS speakers for CEA meetings. Topic: "Re-Tooling College English Teachers for Teaching English As a Second Language." Address: 1219 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C.

(2.) Clyde E. Henson—Assistant Professor of English at Michigan State College—will be available, during the next three months, for talks on "New Demands for English Majors as Junior Executive Candidates in Business and Industry." (E.g.—oil, steel, motors, etc.). He speaks from much first-hand experiences in placing English majors in jobs. An article he has written on this subject will appear in a forthcoming *Critic*.

Correction: Jan. Critic

Page 3, col. 1, should read:

Dr. Howell said the trend toward secularization of higher education has been gaining momentum since World War II and that the humanities have been taking a back seat as to rank and salaries among professors. He pointed out that at the University of North Carolina the combined total of teachers having professorial rank in five departments in Humanities Division is only one more than that of the single Department of Economics and Commerce.

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